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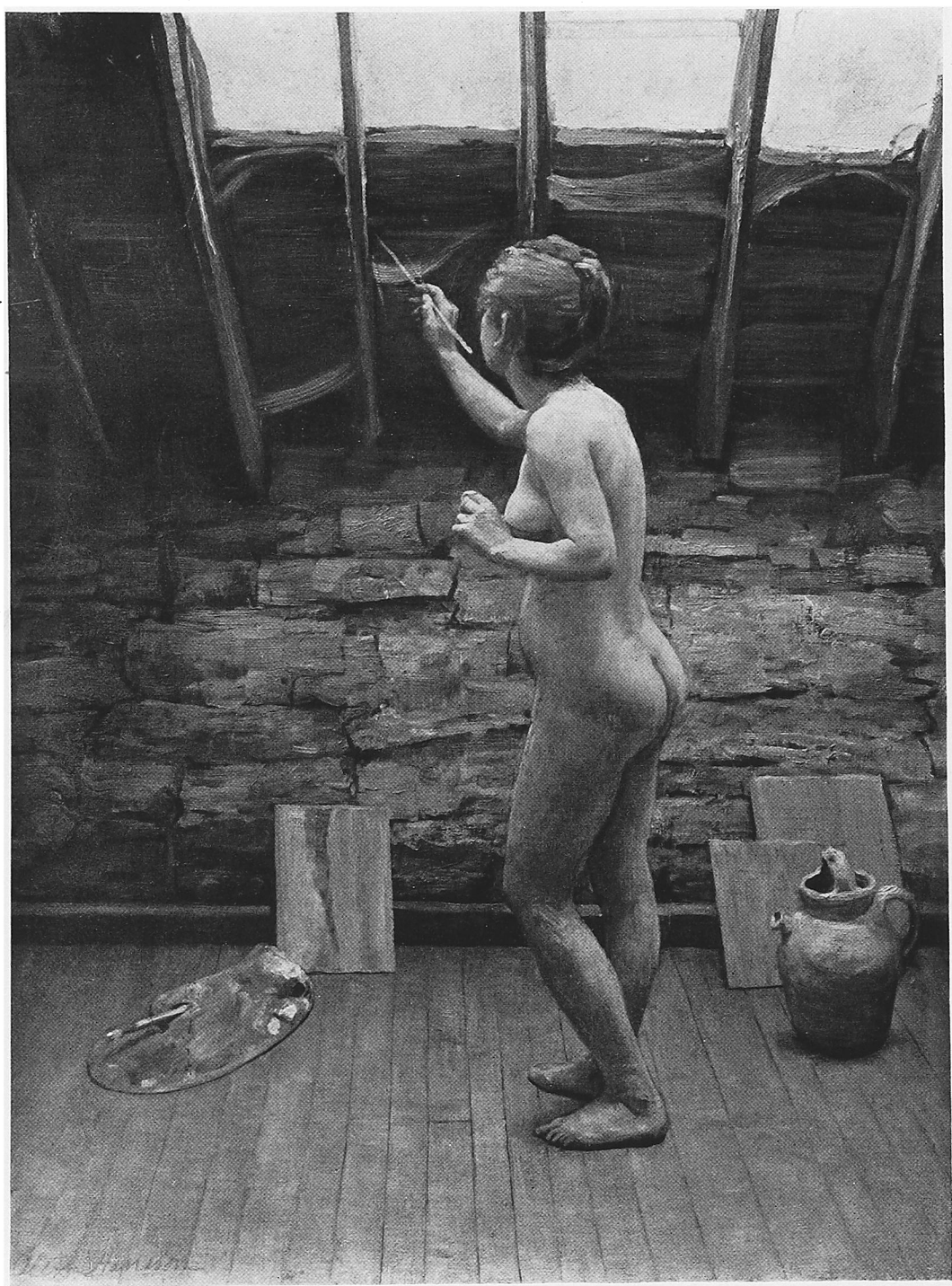
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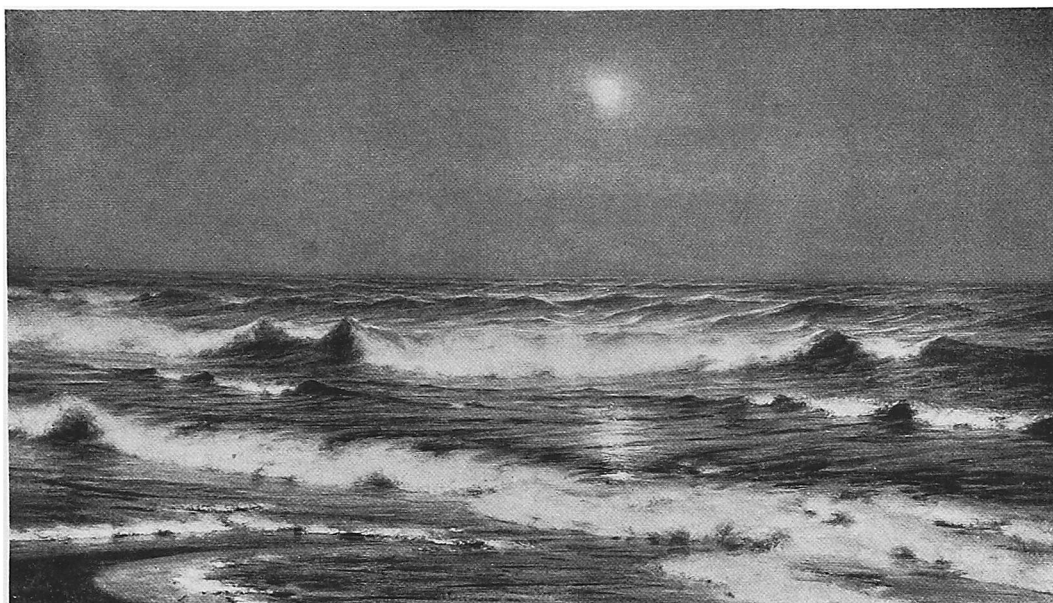
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**MODEL AND SPIDER**  
*By Alexander Harrison*



MOON-FOAM

By Alexander Harrison

## Alexander Harrison

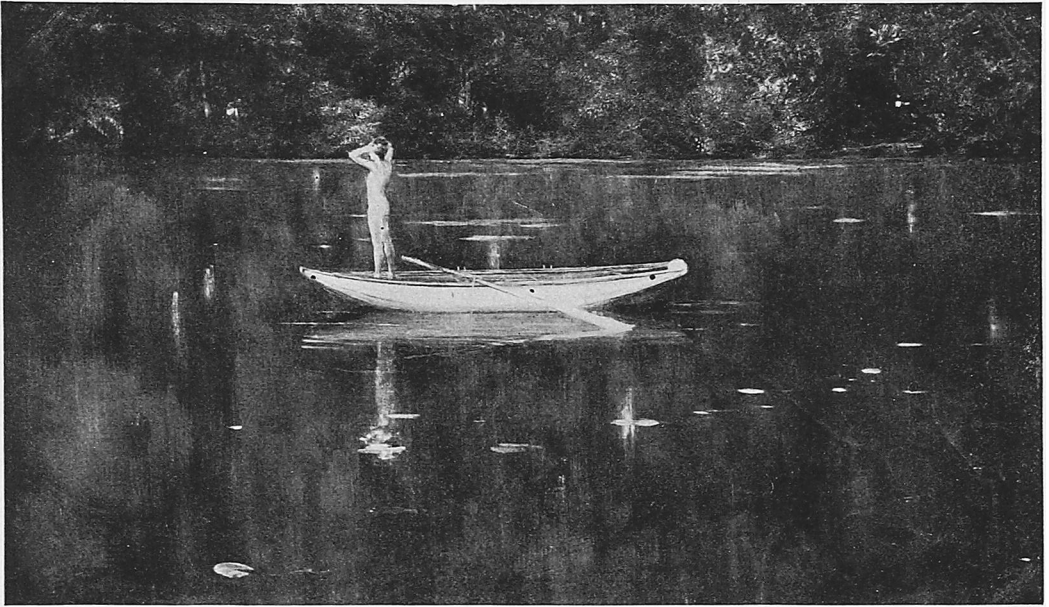
By CHARLES LOUIS BORGMEYER

DURING the winter of 1913 there will be held at Buffalo a retrospective exhibition of the works of Alexander Harrison, an American who has for many years practically held the highest position of any American in the art world of Paris. To the Albright Gallery of Buffalo rightly belongs the honor of the opening exhibition, for it is through Miss Sage's untiring efforts that these fifty-odd pictures have been gathered together. Several of the French museums have once more opened their doors at her plea and allowed their treasures to run the risk of crossing the Atlantic, the Luxembourg among them.

Few people realize the difficulty of organizing such exhibitions as Miss Sage has been able to show at Buffalo since she has become the Director of the Albright Gal-

lery. Take the Prince Paul Troubetzkoy sculptures; the very minor matter of unpacking and packing alone was a Herculean task. *The Nouvelle Société* that she showed in 1912 was made up of men difficult to approach, not keen to show, temperamental to a degree, and still little Miss Cornelia B. Sage came out with flying colors and can still cajole the pictures she wishes from the French Government. This little live-wire directress must surely "have a way with her."

Very few of these important exhibitions are seen by the New York or Boston public. In fact, many New Yorkers I know of make a point of keeping in touch with modern art, particularly European, by going to such exhibitions as take place in Buffalo, Toledo, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The



*SOLITUDE*  
By Alexander Harrison

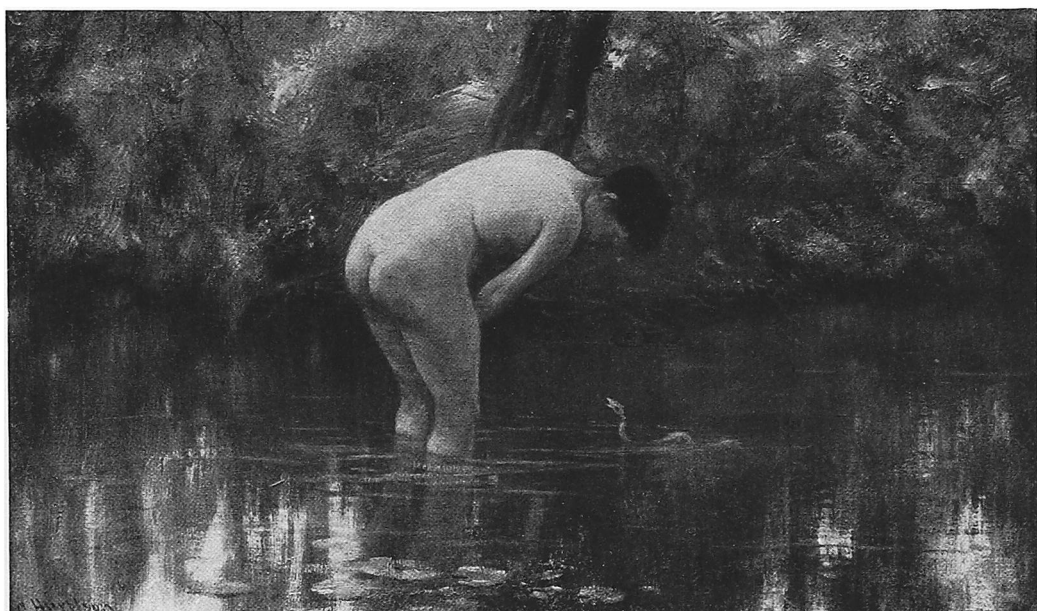
people of these towns and many another of our inland cities, owe a debt of gratitude to their museums of art for the intelligent and unstinted generosity with which their museums have ministered to their artistic needs.

I should like to supplement Miss Sage's good work in bringing together these works of Alexander Harrison for public view, by bringing the man himself before the same public. It is a difficult proposition, this, trying to make others see a friend through one's own eyes, and it usually ends in failure, but if you will bear in mind that Alexander Harrison is a strong, wholesome, clean American gentleman, I may, with the aid of remembered discussions, be able to give you the feeling of having spent an hour with a man of delightful personality, who all unconsciously has given you many things to take away with you and ponder over.

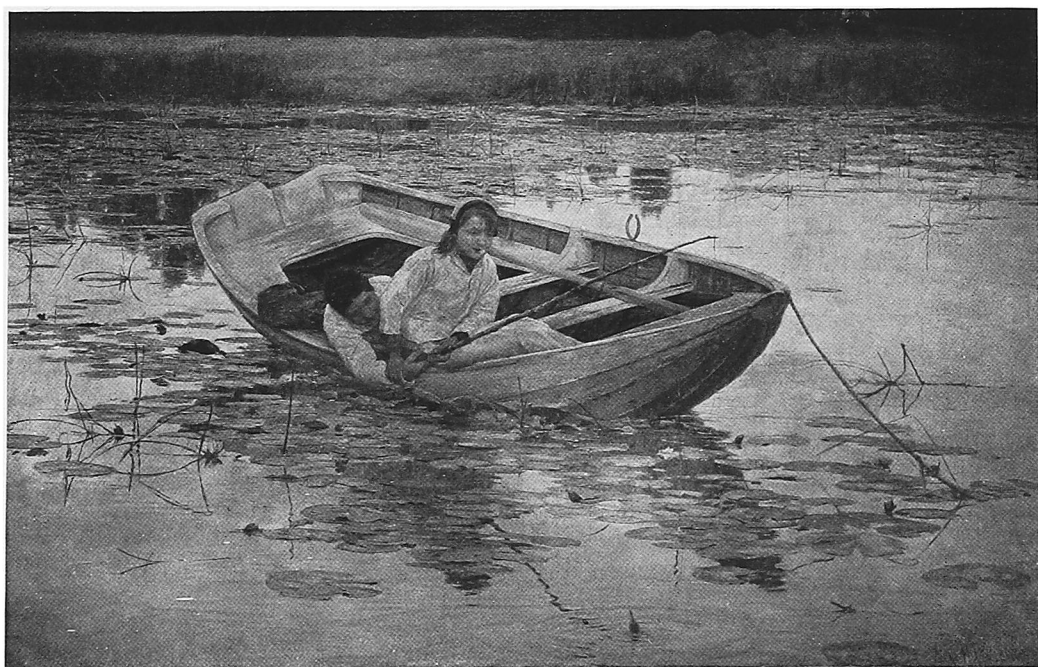
Let us take a taxi and drive to 6 rue du Val de Grâce, ring the noisy bell and in-

quire for Monsieur Harrison of the *Conciergerie* in our best French. As he opens the door wide, we see one of those delightful gardens that is always a surprise and a delight when run into unexpectedly in the heart of big Paris. This one is rather gone to seed, but, none the less, a pleasure after the glare of the streets. We walk up the one flight of stairs, knock and are cheerfully begged to "come in," and there stands our friend, tall, slender (how does he do it!), palette in one hand, the other outstretched in welcome. The studio is a beauty, one of the studios "spoken for" as soon as the health of the tenant begins to show signs of failing, for it is only death that would make one move from it. Poverty is not to be thought of in connection with this particular studio, nor, on the other hand, is wealth. There is the atmosphere of good, steady, serious work, with success attained, rather than the feverish, hungry feeling that often pervades the quarters of the "failures."





*WATER SNAKE*  
*By Alexander Harrison*



*LES AMATEURS (SWEETHEARTS)*  
*By Alexander Harrison*

—Courtesy Art Institute, Chicago

On my last visit to this studio I was fortunate enough to see a number of the canvases Mr. Harrison will include in his "one man" American exhibition, and I can assure those of you who are fortunate enough to live in the towns where these pictures are to be shown, that there is a pleasure in store for you. It was a glorious change from the eubists' and other "ists'" jumble of unsolved riddles and color discords that my mind had retained like a nightmare. One quick glance around the studio sufficed to show that here there was no medley of eccentric and capricious incoherences, no straining after weird or frantic effects, no offense to the eye or to the intelligence, but works of subtle and tender art.

Alexander Harrison's pictures are those of the dreamer-painter, drawing aside the veil to reveal something of the inner truth. The lyrical element in his landscape is its heart and soul, and nature-worship still fills the work of this touching and idyllic painter with delightful emotions. He reveals to us the beauty of his dreamer's soul in many a canvas in this group. The worship of the divine element in Nature forms his true cult.

At the first glance our approval is caught by his color harmonies. Then comes the thought, "This man is a dreamer, a dreamer of marines in the moonlight, in the twilight, or with the glittering sun on the waves." Many of his pictures breathe forth something of the spirit of the pantheist for whom the Divine is everywhere. There is one sketch of sand that could not be finer



GAMIN  
By Alexander Harrison

or more satisfying. So simple are these undulating dunes, so quiet, so soft, so rich in color, that the picture of this tidewater stream with its dune in the distance, its solitary clump of unimportant shrub at the summit, stays in our minds long, long after seeing it. It attracts us by the beauty of its interpretation rather than by its technical perfection. It is a composition of surprising force and beauty, a poetic evocation of the very spirit of the place, in all its happiness, in all its glory of light and color. One breathes its air and longs to stay in its calm.

Some of the canvases are little more than studies, introductory notes for the climax reached later. Sunny bits of the *Riviera*, summer forest streams, a bathing beach, a lake, a landscape peopled with nudes, all aglow with the splendor of light and color that envelops earth, sky and figures.

Theodore Child, in writing of Alexander



*REVEUR (THE DREAMER)*  
By Alexander Harrison

Harrison twenty years ago, summed up his work somewhat as follows:

"The keynote of Mr. Harrison's art is truth to nature. His great preoccupation has been to show the diffused vibrations of outdoor light and to fix the real effect by establishing rigorously the series of relations. The theory of modern French school of painting is that truth suffices, or in other words, all that can be demanded of an artist is sincere observation, logical execution, and emancipation from academic influences, or, as others might say, individuality and self-respect.

"In painting both the landscape and figure, Mr. Harrison has sought to attain truth to nature, not the mere textual image and reproduction, but truth in tone and relative values. His vision of the infinite

stillness of the restless ocean, of the impressive stillness of the silent sky, when the blackness of night looms up over the horizon, of the viscous surface of the rolling waves that seem to moan and wail in the awfulness of the vast solitude, has a grandeur that a poet's majestic metaphors could alone describe. It is a vision more penetrating, more complex, more prismatically brilliant, than any painter has before enjoyed, a vision now tragic and morose, but more often delicate and infinite in fine *nuances* like mother-of-pearl or opal.

"The mere chromatic aspect of Mr. Harrison's marines gives to the eye direct physical enjoyment before the brain perceives that this color reproduces the instantaneous phases of cloud and water, and before analysis reveals how curious is the artist's

precise notation of the appearance of the curling wave, and of the wash that swirls in successive and ever-widening curves, chasing each other over the smooth sands, each with its glassy sheet of mirror-like surface that reflects the sky."

Thus was Alexander Harrison written of twenty years ago by a great art critic. I shall let him speak of his work himself, but I fear the charm of his personality will be lost in these synthesized conversations as I report them. But possibly the man will peep through in spite of the passage of his ideas through my brain, and out by way of my pen. Let us hope so! First of all, be it understood that he is a modest gentleman whose brush does most of his typewriting, and this brush is a jealous, selfish, egotistical brush that turns red with anger when he attempts to use its rivals, the pen or tongue.

On technical training:

No man can quite live up to his highest ideals, but of all men, the artist has the best chance and ought to express himself well. He must have some technical training but must not exaggerate its importance. Walt Whitman and Browning were great poets, despite defective rhetoric; many painters and sculptors, at times Rodin, come under this heading.

To apply and express artistic desires with pen, tongue or brush, a certain amount of technical training is necessary as servant and should never be allowed to assert itself, save under dictation from the heart and brain.

Deeds are fruits, ripening on the trees of art, and must be fruits of love. In all trades and professions the real master is the enthusiast, with brains and physique and training to obey the heart. In manly



*LE PENSEUR (THE THINKER)*  
By Alexander Harrison

*MOON-HAZE**By Alexander Harrison*

love, in music, in finance, in politics, or in war, the heart and brain must dominate the ear, the eye and the biceps—as the engineer is master of the engine and the inventor the god of both.

In military and financial affairs, perhaps the brain may often be the partner of the heart, but in the arts, the heart is master, or senior partner. Genius is love.

This brought us to the interesting subject of temperament. Temperament counts for much and temperaments vary. The artist must be loyal to his own, and not follow the other fellow's, unless similar. As temperaments differ, the variety in fine productions is great. Rubens, Corot, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Turner, Constable, Millet, Cazin, Van Dyke, and a long list including many moderns, are no two alike,

and all are great. Some painters are genuinely versatile in impulse, especially moderns. Courbet, Whistler and Homer were remarkable cases of this in subject, and sometimes in technique.

Technical sequentials and essentials in all professions are first temperamental sincerity; second, breadth of view; third, loyalty of desire—perception, intuition and an expressive power that has the ability to perceive and eliminate non-essentials, i. e., to synthesize. It is not possible to put in everything. No great general worries over the buttons or laces of his soldiers; he scarcely thinks of their heads; no big financier counts the pennies.

On idealism:

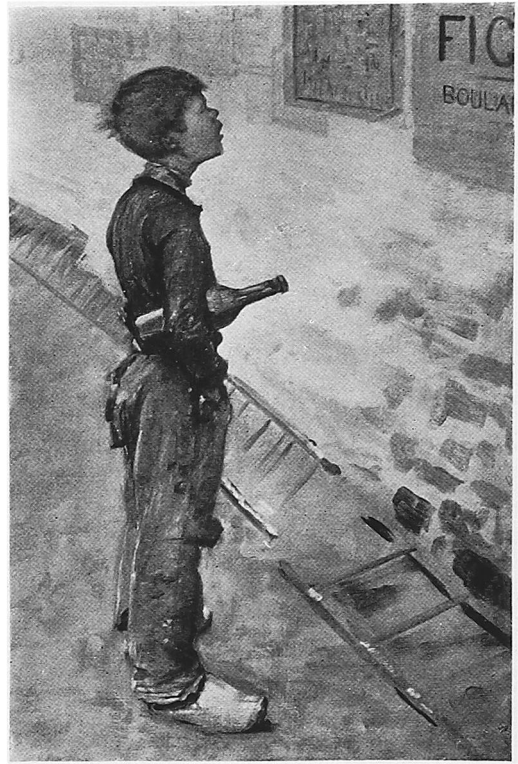
In the arts, the first move to be made is conception with love selection in composi-



tion-tone-color-technique; second, the desire to soar. "*Mon ami il faut planer,*" says Rodin. Composers, poets and painters must take flights in the clouds. The composer who stuck to the sounds of nature (at least without heart selection and technical elimination) would not do. He must rise above even the splendid wrath of thunder, above the melancholy moaning of the winds, above the roaring surf, and must drop goose and donkey in order to complete a harmony masterpiece. The painter is in the same boat and, although a lover of nature, he must ask her to be his helpmate in his scheme for artistic sentiment, beauty and harmony, and must not be a slave of literalism. Harmony and melody, at any expense!

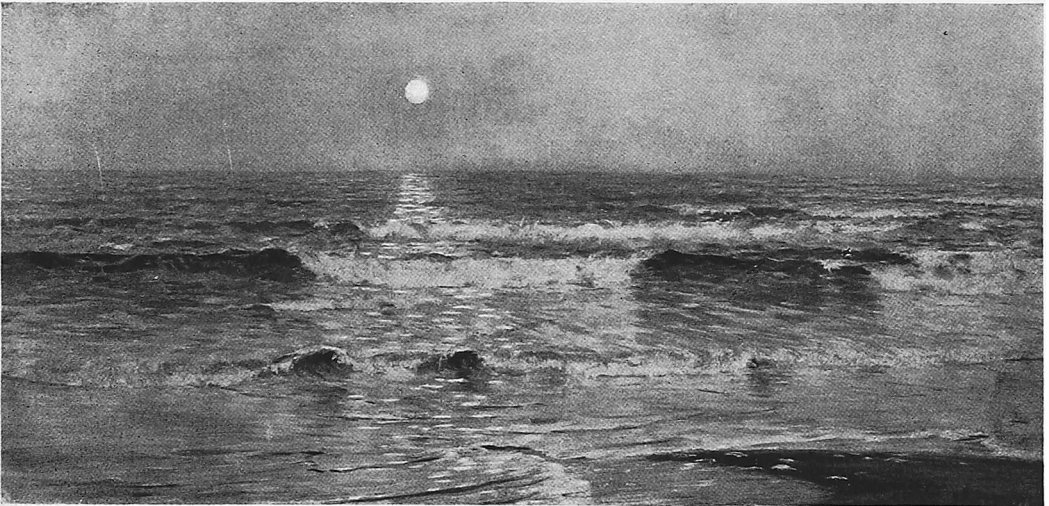
There are exceptions in everything. There are moments when fleeting sounds and color-mass-line harmonies and melodies are found in nature, but it is very rare that one is not obliged to change and eliminate. In any case intuitive love selection and assimilation must reign in a work of art, whether it be opera, picture, poem or statue.

In speaking of another man's work, about which we disagreed: A hundred can-



*BRETON-READER*  
By Alexander Harrison

vases of equivalent merit hung side by side may all be different and all masterpieces—with omissions—but no two will agree on



*LA CREPUSCULE (TWILIGHT)*  
By Alexander Harrison

—Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Louis, Mo.





RIVIERA

By Alexander Harrison

the omissions. Two fine men of equivalent genius may not love each other's work, because of temperamental dissimilarities. They would not both love the same woman. Some men love the same things; some vary. For some of us diversity has charm and the curve is one line of beauty, but not the only one.

On the choice of subject:

Man loves woman and then children, and so, in figure subjects, can, if normal, do his best in both. Some men love to go in the twilight to a lonely beach or to a pine forest and dream about angels. Woman is the foundation. Illusions harmonize. Woman admires man and loves children, and animals, and the normal woman artist beautifully depicts maternity (Mary Cassatt) and

animals (Rosa Bonheur). No artist, however, is always at his highest and all at times paint pot boilers. To be born capable of always applying high rules is to be a past master, and no man ever was that, so that there are always legitimate patches for the professional fault finder.

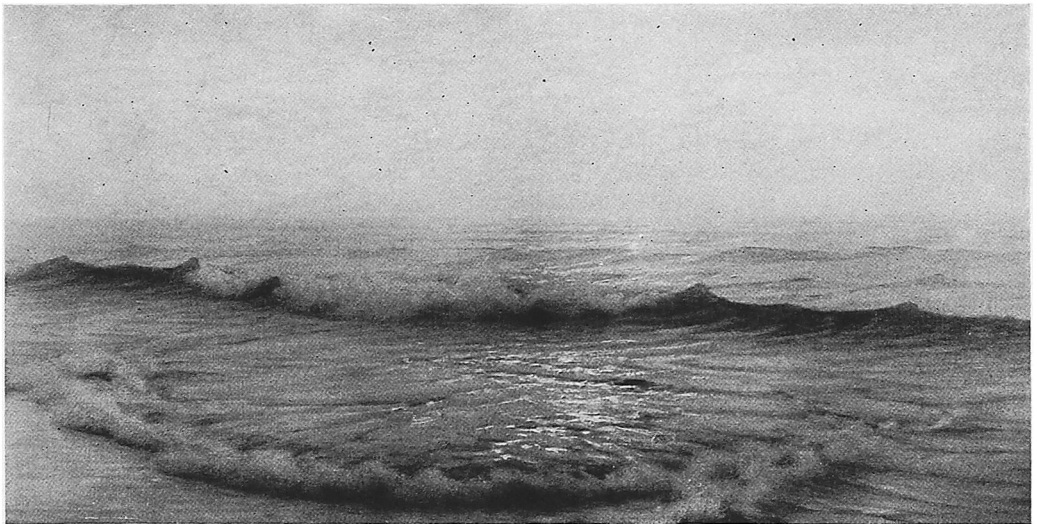
In speaking of the competitive spirit; the competitive spirit is damaging to temperamental loyalty. The amateur collector is, like so many of the artists, driven to fever by competition. If he were naive, sensitive and sincere, his acquisitions would be better. Personally, I would not possess an authentic work by Michelangelo unless I approved of it artistically, but I would go around the corner to the studio of a young artist whose work I love, and buy a sketch.

There are a few modern artists quite up to the highest standard despite the pessimism of George Moore, who, being an Irishman, is "agin the government." The real amateur who has loyalty to his instincts and temperamental preferences, could make a remarkable collection of works of art for a modest sum that would be valuable and famous later. While there is one amateur with naive sincerity and perception who does not permit himself to be led by dollar advertisements, and who follows genuine artistic foresight, there are ninety-nine who are carried by the modern competitive spirit into material and commercial acquisitions. This does not mean, of course, that the works of the great artists, whose prices have soared since their deaths, are not fine, but that some works produced today are just as fine and will get there in time.

The grundy picture or the dollar poem is surely second rate. One of the unavoidable defects of organization, sometimes of loyalty, is snobbishness and many amateurs are weakened by it. In art, as in every manly profession, the man must have courage for the straight line.

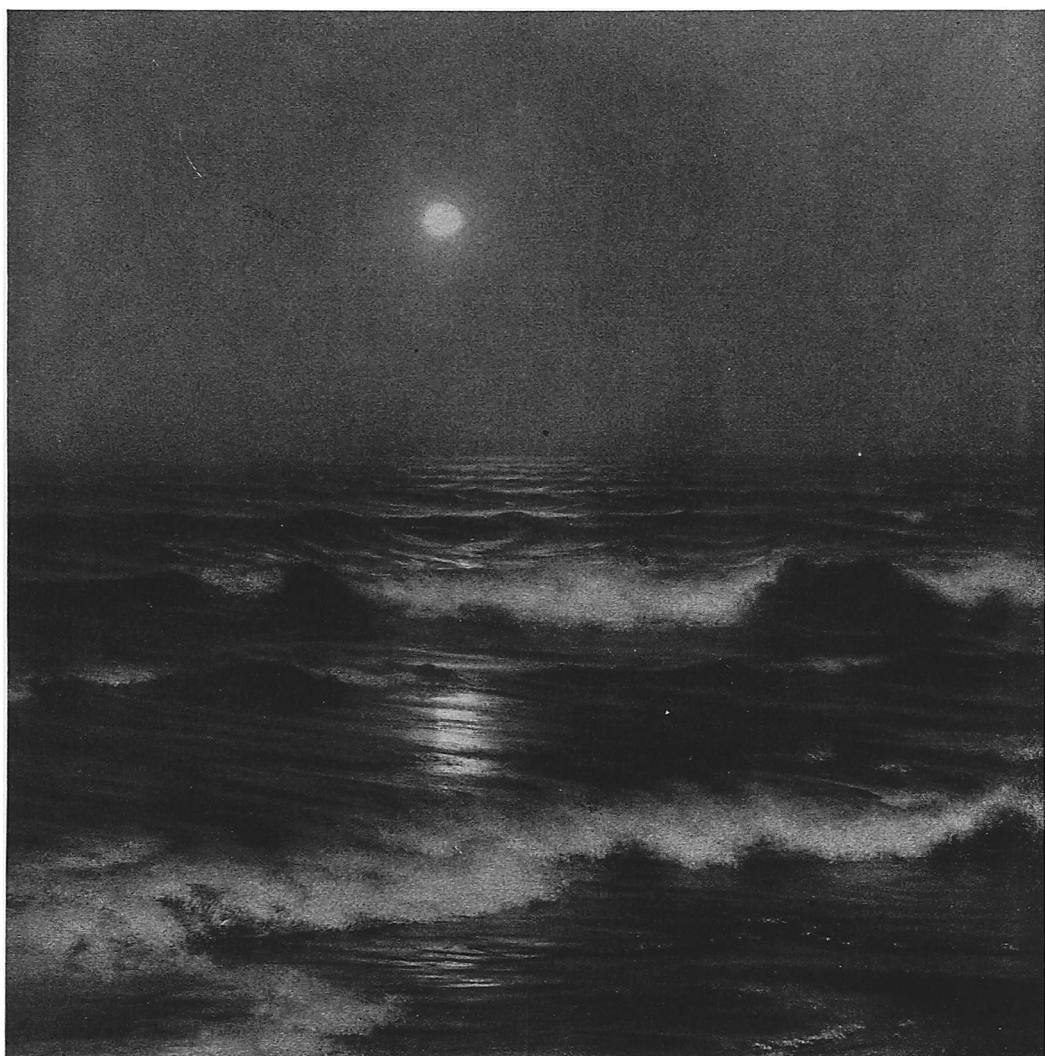
The reserve of civilization that Emerson talks about does not always march with true art. It is true that civilization is reserve, but it has the logical defects of snobbishness, while art, the fruit of civilization, must be impulse. Hence many of its difficulties and troubles. After this little spurt he said: "Please do not think that I am grouchy. I am only trying to be analytical. I am quite happy in chasing the clouds and would not change my art for anything in the world."

These little side-lights may aid us in looking at his pictures, if we have the good fortune to be near one of the museums they are to visit. There will be variety among them, that is one thing sure. Perhaps his variety of subject is too great from the practical viewpoint. According to that, he ought to follow the lines of his greatest success and that I should imagine would be his "Moon Marines." They are, of course, his "best sellers." But Alexander Harrison is not a painter of pot-boilers; he is trying to be an artist and being fond of variety and sequential experiment, he is naturally something of a flirt



*ECUME-SOLEIL (FOAM-SUN)*  
By Alexander Harrison

—Salon, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, 1913



*LEVER DE LUNE (MOONRISE)*  
By Alexander Harrison

—Courtesy of the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D. C.



THE GOLDEN ADRIATIC  
By Alexander Harrison

with his brush. He can excuse himself to himself, if he feels the necessity, by remembering that Rembrandt did a lot of landscape etchings. Corot did some beautiful interiors and nudes. Whistler and Alfred Stevens had among their very best things some gentle marines.

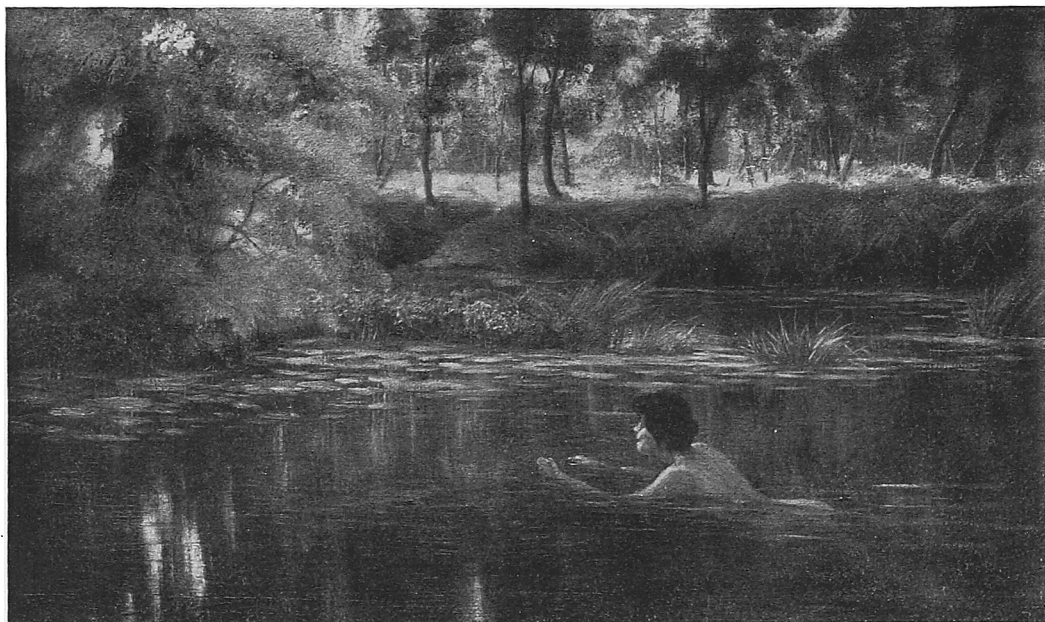
Being a male, and thus a lover of women and children, Alexander Harrison has never yet painted even the head of a man. He says: "At times I like to put up a masculine brush fight, but most of the time I dream about the feminine, gentle moods of nature with the sweet flesh tones of friendly seas and sands and the normal and beautiful curves that they give as Venus silhouettes."

He is not often brutal, but occasionally hits hard when he feels that the chosen subject calls for it. He says that there is far too much brutality in art today, and his explanation of its acceptance by amateurs is that the woman, who usually influences her husband to make the purchase, has a wonder and admiration for virility, even ferocity and male crudity, not having these

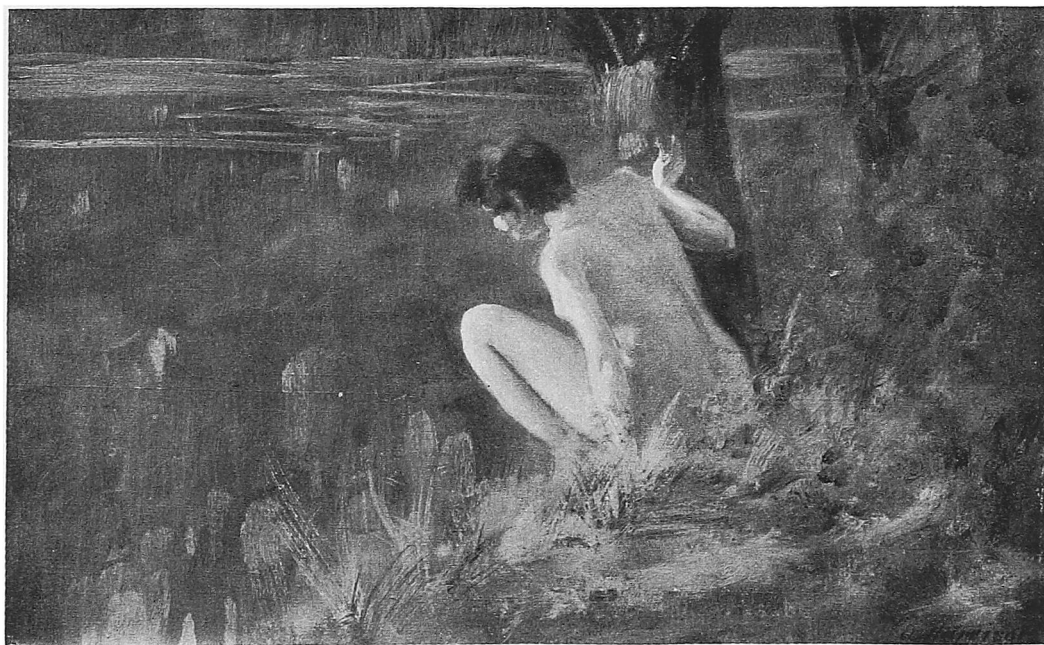
qualities herself. Virility is fine, certainly, but not brutality from the art point of view. The man who loves woman and children ought not to paint tigers save as accessories. Alexander Harrison's pleasure is in the effort and struggle of fighting the sunlight on the water rather than in tigers. The question of luminosity, ambiance and radiation is not an easy one. The relative tone values, tonality *ensemble*, and luminosity are apt to drive one to—I do not remember whether he said soup or soap, but he meant drink.

A very large part of the fleeting effects that he paints are done entirely from memory combined with tone and assimilation theories, and of course lots of them are fizzles. He only counts on one canvas out of four or five coming up to the highwater mark, but even with those, it sometimes happens that when he has pitched a sunlight too low in key in the hope of getting more glitter, it will look like a moonlight, or on the other hand, another too high in key will look wishy-washy.

The proposition of the sunlight on the water is an interesting ocular lesson that



*GIRL SWIMMING*  
*By Alexander Harrison*



*INNOCENCE*  
*By Alexander Harrison*





BAIE BRETONNE (BRITTANY BAY)  
By Alexander Harrison

one ought to carefully apply to many works of art, i. e., when you first gaze at the glitter before nature, your eyes are almost blinded and all the forms are enveloped in the electric dazzle, but after two minutes bold staring, the eyes have altered their focus and all forms and values are visible. In exhibitions, the lighting and the surroundings are often queer and give a damning effect on a good canvas; applying this steady two-minute stare will produce a new impression ambiance.

The variety in nature's moods is so surprising and subtle that there is great excitement in selecting the right "envelope" for the subject. As color gamuts express (through selection and combination, mental moods, yellow meaning youth and gaiety, red passion, force, fighting, and dark blue melancholy and age), so the various intermediary and secondary tints and grays suggest pensive or poetical blendings of these fundamentals. In a figure, in the open air, the expression of a face, the gestures of hands and limbs should be in harmony, and accord with the tints and of course with the lines and value masses of the composition. Also the tone-key, like that on a piano, in a motif that does not cover the entire scale

of the palette, should be selected to fit the mood of the subject, i. e., a grayish middle tone motif can be pitched in a yellowish, reddish or bluish gamut, and it is up to the painter to select the appropriate one. A tempest must have a vital straight or rigid line to express itself best, and must be in angry blue grays or hot reds, whereas the gentler motif must be in pearly tints or yellowish golden gamuts. Several of his sand motifs to be exhibited are pitched in an orange yellow key with the fierce tones suppressed.

The technical subtlety of flesh in the open air in its tone relations to sky, and sky reflections, foam and sand, is exceedingly interesting and beautiful, never being twice the same and really aesthetic in its mood suggestiveness. At one moment it suggests a dreaming mood; at the next a romping one. There are as many suggestions as there are moods. It was one of these suggestions that he sought to express in his earliest Salon success (1882-3) *Chateau en Espagne*, recently presented by J. G. Johnson to the Metropolitan Museum of New York. It was painted in Pont-Aven, Brittany, where after making sketches on the shore six kilometres away, he had two





BRETON SANDS  
By Alexander Harrison

cart loads of sand brought up and dumped in the courtyard of his Pont-Aven studio, where he carefully completed the work. From the first, his real inspiration, when dealing with figure subjects, was to have youth, or childhood in the open air in sentimental and sympathetic accord with nature in her quiet moods. During his entire career he has never painted a serious indoor canvas. The enchantment of distance, the quivering poetry of atmosphere and the quaint and innocent pensiveness of children in the open, have always appealed to his artist heart. He speaks affectionately of this *Chateaux en Espagne*, calling it one of his first loves. It was through it that he made the friendship of Bastien Lepage, who was his intimate comrade until his death. They painted many a day side by side in old Brittany.

Alexander Harrison's personal souvenirs are precious, for during his long stay in France he has known nearly all the great

modern artists and had intimate friendship with Gérôme, Meissonier, Paul Dubois, Bastien Lepage, Falguière, Jules Breton, Carrière, Thaulow, Cazin, Kroyer, Whistler, Puvis de Chavannes and lots of the "still alive." Of Whistler he said, "I adore Whistler at his best. He was a sensitive, gentle poet, with high ideals (despite his wit). The trouble was he pointed his gun at a diamond in the extreme distance, so that naturally he only hit the bull's eye occasionally." Whistler and Harrison began their artistic efforts on the United States Coast Survey in Florida. Harrison worked in Florida for four years; got to dabbling in water colors, and then made a break for Paris, where he went under Gérôme.

But to return to his early anecdotal canvases, *Castles in Spain*. This blue-eyed boy lying on his back on the sands and dreaming of his Castle in Spain still remains one of his best works, although he was still in his student days when he painted it.

*Les Amateurs*, his second Salon success and now in the Art Institute of Chicago, was painted at Grez in the following year. Grez and Barbizon were both, at that time, popular cosmopolitan artists' resorts. It was at Grez that he knew the famous Swede, Carl Larsson and the famous Dane, Kroyer, John Lavery, the Englishman, and the Americans, Cox, Coffin, Jules Stewart and a score of others. The artistic atmosphere of Grez is charmingly described by Will H. Low in his book, "Chronicle of Friendship." Low had left for America a year or so before Alexander Harrison's arrival. The Grez men frequently used to walk across the forest of Fontainebleau and take luncheon with their pals at Barbizon. On one occasion Harrison spent ten days at table with Robert Louis Stevenson, who had just come back with his new wife, from San Francisco. Harrison had met her previous to her marriage at the art school there. Stevenson, in his book "Inland Voyage" also gives a charming glance at the life in Grez (not gray life, as the name

might indicate; far from it, for the Bohemians were young and the arguments were hot).

Having conceived *Les Amateurs* he decided to be hardy and paint it straight from nature. His view point being out in the river, he was obliged to have a barge built and anchored with two heavy stones. This barge was to hold himself and easel and face the two children in a swinging boat. His troubles were easy to foretell. The early rose twilight that he chose was fleeting and varied and there was no time to be lost fussing over the boats that the river currents were swaying. He became desperate and abandoned his straight-from-nature fad and after a series of quick sketches painted the canvas in his studio. This experience was a lesson for him in memory work, and he thinks a good one.

*Les Amateurs* was not as well hung in the Salon of 1884 as the *Chateaux en Espagne*, which had held a good place on the line, but it scored artistic success. *Les Amateurs* is especially interesting because



ECUME-ROSEE (ROSY FOAM)  
By Alexander Harrison

—Salon, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, 1913

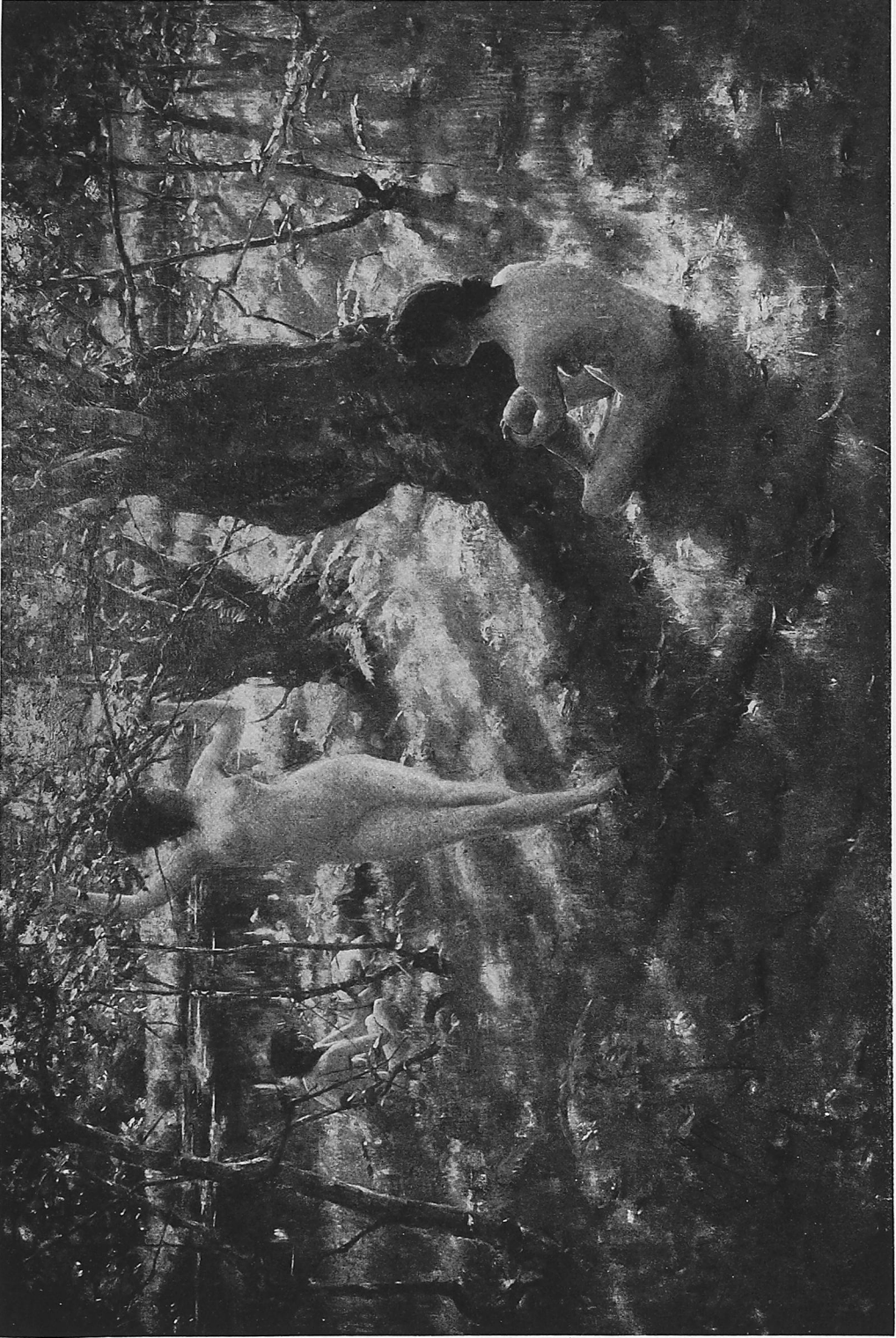


*THREATENING CLOUDS*  
By Alexander Harrison

of its initiative, its composition and its tone qualities. Atmospherically, it is fine; as a study of light it ranks high. The light on the cut hay, on the ripe grain, and the reflections of the trees seen in the water off on the further shore, are splendid. The whole is dominated and developed in an atmosphere of pure light and in the color of gold. All colors, near and far, merge gradually into those about them. The water, the land, the grass, the grain, the trees in the distance, are all united. The heavens can be seen in the water, where they find reflection, and the lilies and leaves covering the smooth surface float and grow as if they formed a part of the water. They are not pasted or pinned on. He has seen the whole as a whole; the girl and boy belong to it as much as the trees or the pond lilies or the grass. The shore, the grass along the water's edge, is virulent and growing; the land within the reach of moisture is strong in color and strong in growth. The only movement is found in the bobber on the

fishing line. His desire was to suggest in quick, sympathetic surroundings the nice, timid and shy love of the boy for the shy girl, they having found in the fishing rod a pretext for being chums. They are not posed, nor is their interest simulated, the girl, ugly as she is, still holds forth a certain charm for the beholder.

The year after painting *Les Amateurs*, Alexander Harrison devoted most of his time to painting the sea on the coast of Brittany. I remember not long ago hearing him say that to him there was no other region where one could get the same effects of light and color as on the shores of beautiful, although at times hardy, Finistère. He said, "I admire especially the simplicity and the economy of material with which the effect is produced. The components of beauty we see in Finistère enter into many of the world's most famous landscapes. Here is the same purple that we find in sea-lavender, and the same reds and yellows that we get in an infrequent tiled roof.



EN ARCADIE (IN ARCADIA)  
By Alexander Harrison

—Courtesy of The Luxembourg, Paris



VAGUE CARESSANTES (CARESSING WAVES)  
By Alexander Harrison

The country abounds in a multitude of other beautiful effects, for nature seems very prodigal of them, especially in her heavens, some call them skies.

"At first sight the Finistère country may seem monotonous and dull, but it ends by implanting a deep sense of beauty and charm. It has the space, peace and religious spirit of the background to Millet's *Gleaners* or *Angelus*, but with a more rugged and more noble setting beneath its boulders and hills." Each year finds Alexander Harrison for a few months at least, in this same Brittany, so, although we may accuse him of being a flirt with his brush, we cannot accuse him of being inconstant to place.

During the summer of 1884 Alexander Harrison was one evening walking on the *digue* at Concarneau with Bastien Lepage. A beautiful twilight moon soared in front of them across the small bay, and he then boasted to his friend that he would paint a masterpiece of it. The following day he

made a small memory sketch of it that was fairly successful, and then a series of experiments to improve tone, composition, etc., and finally during the winter developed the twilight *Lever de Lune* now in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington, and then the larger canvas of the same motif, the *Crepuscule* of the St. Louis Museum.

The Luxembourg has another one of these *Moon Marines* that was very much liked, due largely, I fancy, to its colortone qualities. Another at Quimper Museum attracts artists particularly because of these same qualities.

The picture owned by the St. Louis Museum was acquired by that museum through a competitive game. The American Art Company gave an exhibition in New York to which American artists loaned their works on the understanding that the visiting public would each cast vote for his favorite canvas, and that at the close of the show, by drawing of lots, the works would





OLIVE TREES  
By Alexander Harrison

be given to city museums. *Crepuscle* gained the largest vote and Harrison was paid \$2,500 for it. The St. Louis Museum won the picture in the drawing of lots that followed.

The *Lever de Lune* of the Corcoran Gallery was bought later by a Brooklyn Collector from a "one man" exhibition for the modest sum of \$900, and after his death it was sold at auction to the Corcoran Gallery for \$3,650.

Following the *Crepuscle* year (1884) Alexander Harrison spent many months in Brittany developing two large canvases, one *La Vague*, now in the Philadelphia Academy, and the second a four-metre long canvas of nude boys playing in sands and bathing. Both pictures were exhibited in the Salon. *La Vague* was given a place of honor in the center of a panel in one of the large square rooms. *The Bathers*, although

of the two it represented more initiative and more struggle and more *verve*, was not as well placed. Many thought it certainly deserved the better place.

*La Vague* was done, like the *Crepuscle*, entirely from memory following a series of memory sketches and experimental trials, on an effect that he had seen during one of his promenades to the sea near Pont Aven.

*La Vague* was purchased through the influence of Mr. Johnson for the Philadelphia Academy at the splendid price of \$6,000, and is still popular. Both *La Vague* and *Crepuscle* are particularly interesting as studies of color and of values.

Alexander Harrison grows momentarily unhappy as he tells the tragic history of the burning to death of his boys. In losing these *Bathers* he feels he lost a canvas that would have dominated the present ex-



hibition for example. The preliminary labor had cost him six or seven months of time, and then it took a great deal of audacity to paint and exhibit this picture at an epoch when in America nudes, even of young children, were a scandal. When he conceived the idea of painting these boys he began by making sketches on the spot, a place on the coast near Pont Aven. One of the intermediary studies of two life-sized boys on the sands will be included in the Alexander Harrison Exhibition this winter. This particular picture received a medal at Munich.

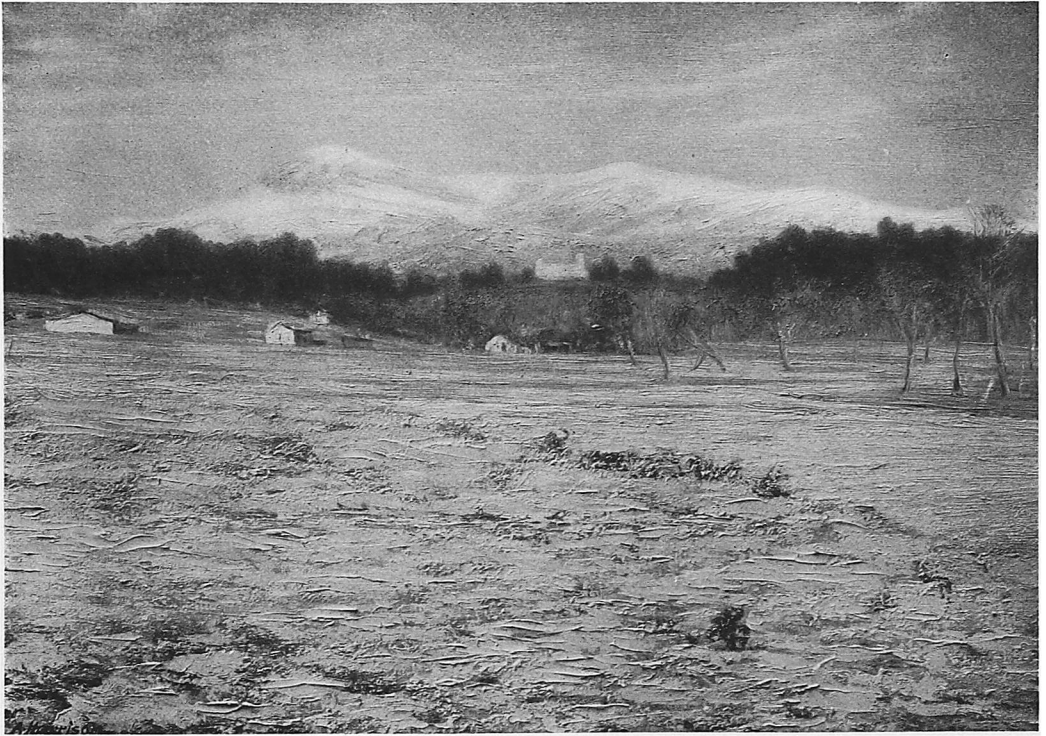
Before their burning, the *Bathers* and *La Vague* were exhibited in the Philadelphia Academy. Curiously enough, despite the animosity of the Quakers to art, Philadelphia was the pioneer city in America in art matters in those days. This is shown by the date of the foundation of the Pennsylvania Academy.

The results of these initiative series of experiments convinced him that, so far as figures were concerned, in his pictures, he should always, because of their purity and sincerity, do nudes in simple, natural and sincere touch with nature, with no attention whatever paid to Mrs. Grundy.

Following the Bathing Boys, he had the audacity to pose girls in landscape sunshine in the quiet woods of Brittany and Grez, and all the real artists (including Bastien Lepage) patted him on the back. From a series of twenty or thirty hasty impressions, made hurriedly on the spot, only one out of four or five being successful, he selected one and from it painted *En Arcadie*. It cost him nearly a year's work, but he carried out the large canvas in his Paris studio, with real conviction and enthusiasm. The posing of the graceful, simple girls in the woods and on the border of the streams was a sentimental and ocular delight.



CAIRO, EGYPT; SUBURBS  
By Alexander Harrison



"PAYSAGE"  
By Alexander Harrison

The picture was badly hung in the Salon, although some members of the Jury, unknown to Alexander Harrison personally at the time, put up a lively fight for it. The then "King of the French Art Critics," Paul Mentz, started his review of the Salon with a full column devoted to it, and to Puvis de Chavannes, who, by the way, was not by any means in vogue at the time. This particular form of praise means so much more in France than it does to us in America, that it is difficult for us to grasp just what it meant to young Harrison at the time. *En Arcadie*, like *La Vague*, was shown at various European exhibitions and was universally popular. It received the Medal of Honor at Vienna, but in America at the Universal Exhibition where it was shown with three of his other canvases, *Chateaux en Espagne*, *Crepuscule* and *La*

*Vague* it was too fly for Grundy and was hung as much out of sight as possible, and generally looked upon as scandalous. Whistler, Sargent and Rodin liked it from the first. Now nearly all the artists do. Nineteen years after it was painted, it was bought for the Luxembourg and it always occupies the place of honor in the stranger's section, where American pictures are shown.

Last summer, I had the curiosity to watch the visitors to that section. I wished to know which of all the pictures in the American artist section attracted the most attention, and *En Arcadie* unquestionably was the popular favorite. This led me to note, on the 27th of March of this year, as I sat for a half hour in the room with Harrison's *Les Amateurs*, in the Art Institute at Chicago, that many a visitor walked

directly up to *Les Amateurs*, looked at it, passed on and out—neglecting many another picture hung in the same room, and there were many good works there too, by both Americans and foreigners. I wonder why!

The Luxembourg *Solitude* was one of Whistler's pet Harrisons. This small nude was done at Grez. One of his Grez nymphs, really only a study, was bought by the Royal Gallery of Dresden and another by Herr Krupp of gun fame.

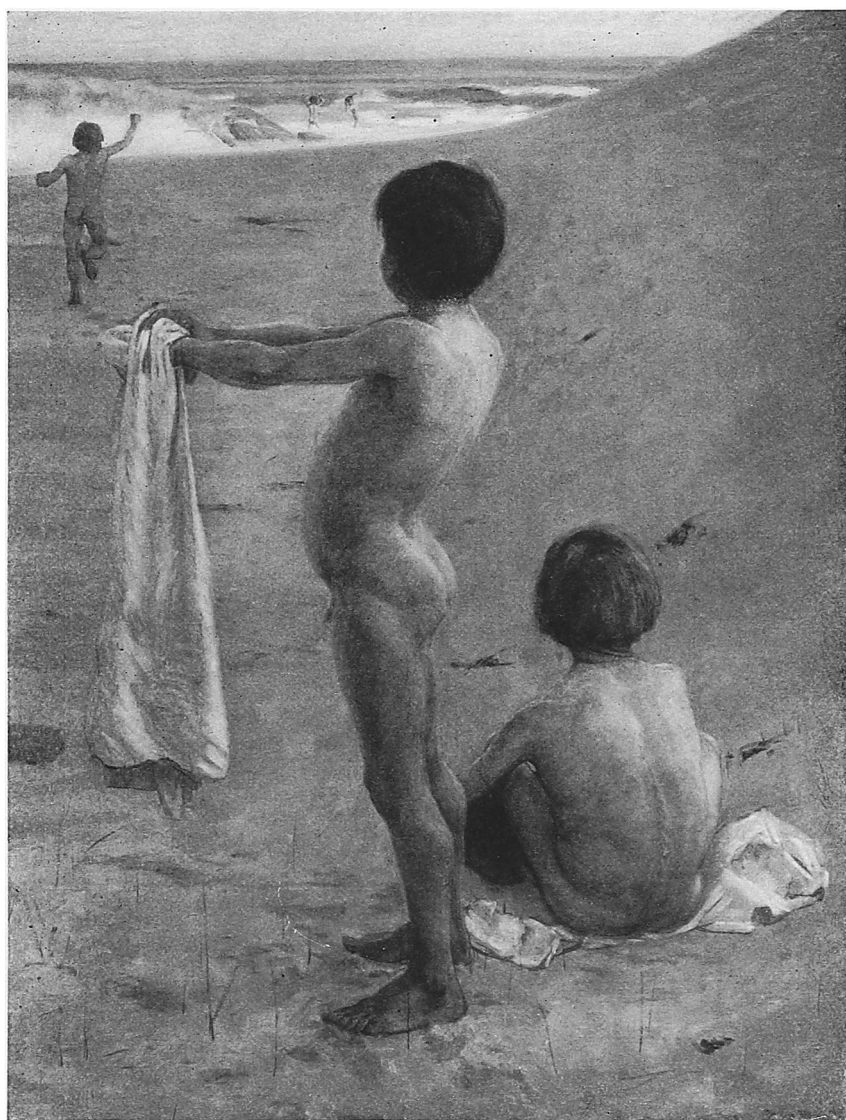
In speaking of the pictures he thought he would like to send to the States, he seemed to feel some hesitation about sending nudes, remembering, I suppose, that *En Arcadie* had made a scandal when shown here. I assured him that though occasionally scandalized, Mrs. Grundy is getting used to nudes, little by little. We have had Sorolla's children and others; surely no one can help but feel the charm of nice, simple kiddies watching the sea and sky, or the gulls and

sails, although they may not be dressed like little Lord Fountleroyes.

In regard to his *En Arcadie* he put this question: "Would it not really afford you pleasure to see graceful girls bathing and reposing in pools and woods far away from Mrs. Grundy, or jolly kids bathing in the sea and romping on the sands?" And then he made this unnecessary defense: "I once wrote a short preface for Miss Van Vorst's book, 'Modern French Masters,' in which I voiced my artistic convictions in saying that 'The masterpiece must be a love child.' Now I love space, air and nudes with color beauty, much more than I do streets and clothes or Mrs. Grundy, and as loyalty to genuine and temperamental impulse is the best guarantee for fine paint work, I shall continue to do occasional series of nudes under God's sky and enjoy the nature and finesse of the work. Not that I hesitate to admire many, many beautiful paintings of clothed creatures, but every man has his



LE RIVIERE LOING  
By Alexander Harrison



*HAPPY SUMMER DAYS*  
*By Alexander Harrison*

fad, and I have mine. Perhaps I feel a hesitation about sending my boys and girls where they may be received with shrugs or worse yet, leers, but a collection of my works without them would be absurd. Americans have long ago swallowed the old Egyptian and Greek nudes without kicking; Sorolla and Lillian Genth have not been ostracized; so I shall send what I feel are some of my most valient and difficult dabs, and if I 'catch it' will conceitedly say to myself, 'Of course any good new note in art takes time to catch on with the average public.' "

I think Alexander Harrison need have no fear, for he is one of the few painters who depict the nude for its beauty without thought of sensual appeal. Alas for the man or woman who cannot separate the two.

He excels in suggesting the undulating, supple form of woman and the gracefulness of her movements. His nymphs grouped in forest glades or by waters' edges have but to dance to change the scene to one of ancient times, when all woods were filled with idyllic creatures.

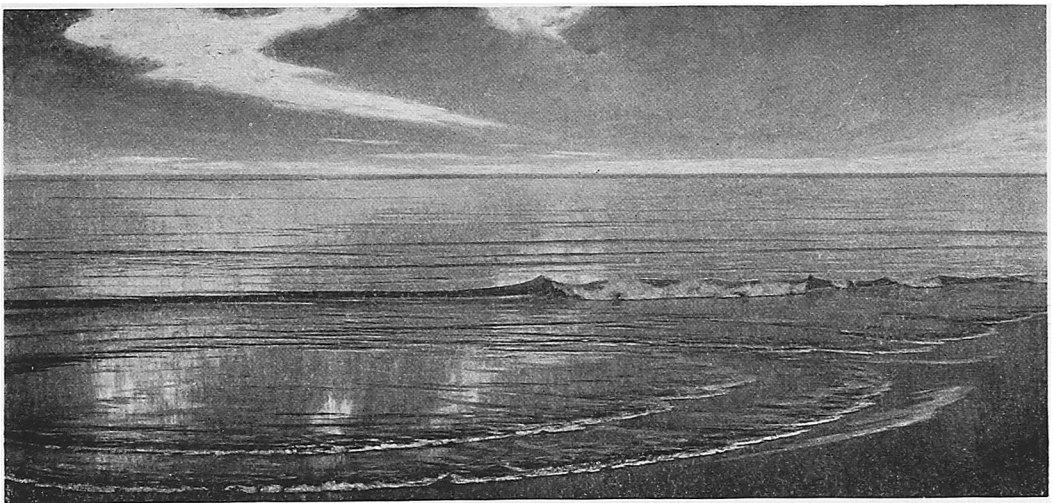
The *Boy Series* is one of my favorites

and the *Penseur* is, I think, one of the good ones. This note was a new one for Alexander Harrison, and that is another one of the beauties of his art. He has long been recognized as one of our pioneers in art, the spirit of searcher is still full of vitality within him, and there is still a point regarded by him as unattained. During this last year he has once more "scared the public and pleased the artists" by one or two red harmonies, assimilated and synthesized souvenirs of his four years in Florida, or perhaps, of California's sunset glows. For several years he has been experimenting with a decorative idea in the form of a blended triptych in the three primary colors playing with each other, without violating nature or harmony-melody rules:

Day	Sunset	Night
Yellow	Red	Blue

Spots of each in each mass, and one mass blended into the other.

It has been a busy year for Alexander Harrison for preparing for his exhibition has made him work overtime, I imagine. At any rate, he tells me that for a "lazy artist" he is truly a busy man, and speaks of having developed some old schemes. One a



THE GRAND MIROIR  
By Alexander Harrison

—Courtesy of the Commissioner of Fairmount Park, W. P. Wilstuch Collection, Memorial Hall, Philadelphia



*NIGHT, FISHING*  
By Alexander Harrison

note of pure lyrical pathos that shows the moment of evening when the air has still a reminiscence of day, although the tender light of the moon is making itself felt. In this we look eastward across the surf, the setting sun back of us throws its copper light on the foam, the moon on the horizon. Another "Lucky Series" as he calls it, of sunlight on breaking waves. Some are in yellowish gamuts, others in pink, or gray-green, all with varied compositions. Then there is, for him, a vigorous *Back water*. Another, a simple country river landscape that he did at Moret and calls *Country Studio*. For years this was the studio of George Bernard, one of America's very first sculptors (Harrisburg State House, etc.).

Part of last winter he spent in Spain and Italy and he is quite sure to have some new impressions from these places to show.

I have said nothing of the honors that

have been given to Alexander Harrison. In France they are those given only to the chosen few. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1889, Officer in 1901. He is a member of all the big societies of France, England, Germany and Austria, and has pictures in the Museums in all these countries. In America he was made an Academician in 1901 and belongs to the societies of his native town, Philadelphia. He is represented in many of our museums and I imagine this noteworthy exhibition will so compel the admiration of all those who takes pride in American art at its subtlest and best that other museums will "acquire" works by him. To understand all of Alexander Harrison's works would not be easy, but the result of them is always to give pleasure and to inspire the desire to see more of them. They, like Mr. Harrison himself, are thought provoking.





*GOLDEN MOON*  
*By Alexander Harrison*



*EVENING*  
*By Alexander Harrison*



*TRANQUIL NIGHT*  
*By Alexander Harrison*